



**MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
February 18, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm.

**Present:** Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Deirdre Kvale, Michelle Jerde, and Jahn Dyvik

**Staff Present:** City Administrator: Scott Weske; Public Works Director: Sean Diercks; and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller

**Absent:** Council: Tom Skjaret (with prior notice)

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MAYOR'S COMMENTS - LONG LAKE NEWS, MEETING REVIEW AND UPDATES**

Mayor Miner offered the following comments and updates:

Mayor Miner noted that he hoped people were having a chance to enjoy their winter activities.

Prior to the City Council meeting, the Economic Development Authority (EDA) met and voted 4:2 to enter into negotiations with Lifestyle Communities for the development of EDA-owned land on Virginia Avenue, and the developer is interested in purchasing the majority of the homes on Virginia Avenue as well for their proposed project. More conversations will take place in the coming months.

Council member Skjaret is absent from the meeting with prior notice due to a work commitment.

**APPROVE AGENDA**

*A motion was made by Jerde, seconded by Dyvik, to approve the Agenda as presented. Ayes: all.*

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda consisted of:

- A. Approve Minutes of February 4, 2020 City Council Work Session
- B. Approve Minutes of February 4, 2020 City Council Meeting
- C. Receive Minutes of January 21, 2020 Economic Development Authority Meeting
- D. Approve Vendor Claims and Payroll

*A motion was made by Dyvik, seconded by Jerde, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Ayes: all.*

**OPEN CORRESPONDENCE**

No one appeared to address the City Council during Open Correspondence.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **Discuss Establishing Accounts with Oppenheimer & Co. Inc. Investment Firm**

Administrator Weske recalled that previously, the Council voted to terminate the Investment Advisory Agreement with Ehlers Investment Partners. Ehlers Investment Partners had been managing the City's investment portfolio; however, as fees paid to Ehlers for their service continued to rise, Council determined termination of the agreement was warranted as fees being paid to the firm for managing the City's minimal risk portfolio were found to be excessive. Subsequently, Council had met with Jack Fay from RBC Capital Markets and discussed his firm's approach on managing funds like the City's. Since the City's investment policy limits risky investments, the portfolio focuses primarily on laddering CDs and US Treasury bills. The Council ultimately approved establishing accounts with RBC Capital.

Mr. Fay has switched firms from RBC Capital Markets to Oppenheimer & Co. Inc., and as the City's relationship with Mr. Fay since 2015 has been very positive and appreciated, staff is recommending moving to establish accounts for the City's investments with Mr. Fay at his new place of employment. Oppenheimer & Co. Inc. offers the same service and same product availability as the City is currently experiencing.

Jack Fay, Oppenheimer & Co. Inc., discussed his change in employment, and confirmed establishing accounts with his new employer would result in no difference in fees and products for the City. Mr. Fay and Administrator Weske responded to Council member questions regarding the status of the City's investment portfolio and continued investment strategies.

*A motion was made by Kvale, seconded by Jerde, to authorize the City Administrator to work with Oppenheimer & Co. Inc. to establish accounts for the City's investments and to provide authorized signers on City letterhead. Ayes: all.*

### **Update on Fire Service Contract and Related Discussions**

Mayor Miner indicated that the Fire Advisory subcommittee would be meeting next Wednesday, and Long Lake representatives will be meeting with City of Medina officials to discuss potential partnerships and interactions with two of the four fire departments they are currently served by. Last week, Medina officials accompanied by representation of some of their fire departments had visited Cloquet to learn about their experiences with the fire service district they'd established 10 to 12 years ago. Since the district had been formed, it had grown from two cities to 10 over a widespread area. The district also provides ambulance service. The takeaway from the meeting was that in their experiences, the district approach had been successful. The district has taxing authority with decisions made by a Commission rather than by City Councils. Costs to taxpayers had gone down overall in participating communities as the departments all began sharing resources through the district approach, and staffing has been less of an issue as the district has employed full-time firefighters. Mayor Miner heard no news of any service quality issues mentioned during the visit, and Medina and Maple Plain have expressed some excitement over this approach. Orono did not participate in the visit, but has indicated they would be willing to discuss a fire service district concept. At this time though, there remains the issue of taxing authority. Some statutory changes are needed, but interested officials are working to learn more about that issue.

Weske reported that he had met with Orono's City Administrator to go through a spreadsheet listing a breakdown of equipment. They did not come to terms on an agreeable price of the fire station building, and both cities would want to obtain the services of their own appraiser. Conversation ended up moving towards discussing what a larger fire service or public safety district could look like in the future, and potentially working towards something of that nature if taxing authority can be achieved. Weske pointed out an example that as mutual aid provides for cities whose fire

departments have ladder trucks to respond to calls in communities that don't, it could only be a matter of time before those cities are asking other cities to contribute to expenses associated with maintenance and replacement of their vehicles that are being called out.

Mayor Miner thanked the Long Lake Fire Department for responding to a big house fire in Woodland, where 20 fire departments assisted on a very cold night at a fire where no hydrants were available and water had to be pumped in. He confirmed the house had been under construction at the time and was a total loss, though fortunately nobody was hurt.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**LMCC Meeting** – Council member Kvale had an opportunity to attend an LMCC meeting and had learned a lot about the organization. Cities will be receiving letters that Mediacom is going to be raising their rates. As people are “cutting the cord” and going wireless, fees are impacted and funding sources are diminishing.

**Development Notification Signage** – Council member Kvale mentioned she'd noticed in some cities, when you drive around, signs are posted advising of development projects. She wondered whether that was by ordinance. City Clerk Moeller did not believe that was by ordinance but was rather a city's choice to post as part of their public notification process. She indicated staff could look into that for future postings.

**Setback in PUD Ordinance** – Council member Dyvik noted that as zoning ordinance sections are updated, Council may want to consider changing setbacks as they were established in the PUD ordinance. It was also noted though that a variance from setback requirements is a viable option to grant exceptions to setbacks for certain projects. He inquired whether workflow warranted consideration of hiring a full-time planner. Moeller and Weske advised against doing so, as a majority of anticipated redevelopment sites were already under contract or had gone through approvals, and workflow for planning services will be diminished. Fees for planning consultant services for review of land use applications are reimbursed through escrow at this time, thereby reducing financial impact to the City for these services.

**RFP for Former BP Station Site** – Mayor Miner reported that in the EDA meeting prior to the Council meeting, the EDA had learned that no proposals had been received to respond to the RFP issued for the former BP station site. The property will remain vacant at this time.

**Watermain Breaks** – Public Works Director Diercks provided Council with reports of watermain breaks experienced within the previous week, including one on Westwood Drive and another on Heather Lane. With about five watermain breaks experienced this winter, Public Works will be having to reorder repair materials and supplies to have on hand. Diercks described the working relationship between the repair contractor and City staff during a watermain break, and explained how the City is billed for the contractor's assistance. He also mentioned a recent fire sprinkler and air compressor failure that had taken place the previous Thursday. Diercks recalled that the City has spent approximately \$50,000 associated with watermain breaks over the past year, and it is worth being aware of the condition of this infrastructure when considering road improvement projects. Moeller noted that for the first time, staff had been able to use the City's online billpay system to locate email addresses for some of the impacted residents in the watermain break areas to send notification to residents electronically in addition to the paper notices delivered by Public Works.

**Rink Facilities** – Diercks commented that the Holbrook Park skating rink has and continues to be very well used. Public Works ceased maintaining the rink on the lake a few weeks ago, as no one was using it.

**Plowing for Unexpected Snowfall** – Council member Kvale and Mayor Miner expressed appreciation to Public Works for plowing earlier that morning after the larger than anticipated snowfall.

**ADJOURN**

*Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 7:23 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Moeller  
City Clerk